

LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of Housing, Community Planning & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee meeting held in the Railway East, County Hall, Dundalk on Monday, 23rd April 2018, at 2:30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Joanna Byrne (Chair), Jim Tenanty, Maeve Yore, Ruairí Ó Murchú, Pearse McGeough, Pearse McGeough, Paul Bell, Liam Reilly
Mr. Pat McCormick, Development/Construction Rep
Mr. Colm O'Hanrahan, Trade Union Rep
Mr. Garrett Weldon, Social Inclusion Rep, PPN
Mr. Aubrey Halley, Voluntary Rep, PPN

Officials: Joe McGuinness, Director of Services
Aoife Lawler, Senior Executive Officer
John Lawrence, Senior Executive Officer
Paula Gribben, Administrative Officer

1. Minutes

On the proposal of Mr. Colm O'Hanrahan and seconding of Cllr. Pearse McGeough the minutes of the meeting of 22nd January were adopted.

2. Matters Arising

Nil

3. Rent Pressure Zones

A presentation was given by Mr. David Silke and Mr. Daragh McCarthy from the Housing Agency in relation to the background and general impact of rent pressure zones. The presentation focused on a number of matters including:

- Procedure for creating a Rent Pressure Zone;
- Requirements to satisfy a recommendation for a Rent Pressure Zone;
- Process for revoking a Rent Pressure Zone;
- Exemptions within a Rent Pressure Zone;
- Current status of Rent Pressure Zones in Louth.

It was noted in particular that for the designation of a Rent Pressure Zone the rent must be greater than the national average rent, have an inflation rate of at least 7 percent and be rising in the last 4 out of 6 quarterly rent stats released by the RTB.

The presentation also focused on the role of the Residential Tenancy Board in this process. A number of specific questions were asked and dealt with, including:

- The use of the local electoral area as the area to be considered in a Rent Pressure Zone;
- Matters of rent certainty;
- Calls for Dundalk to be made a Rent Pressure Zone and noting of the significant rise and rent levels in the Ardee Municipal area;
- The issue of unregistered tenancies; and
- The impact on adjoining areas on the designation of a Rent Pressure Zone.

All members welcomed the presentation, and in conclusion it was agreed that the Housing Agency would welcome a submission made by the Housing SPC with regard to Rental Pressure Zone designations.

4. Housing Needs Assessment 2018

Aoife Lawler gave a brief in relation to the 2018 Housing Needs Assessment and the need for all housing applicants who were notified to formerly respond to the matter. It was noted that to date that only 637 out of 1,700 applicants had actually responded.

A discussion ensued in relation to the communication of these matters and other matters including return post, department blocks, etc.

5. Update on Choice Based Letting

Aoife Lawler, SEO, gave a presentation in relation to the current operational Choice Based Letting in County Louth. Again it was noted that a high number of applicants who have not yet used this system, and concern was expressed with regard to same. It was agreed that further analysis would be completed in relation to those who are not engaging on the model offered.

6. Regional Homeless Action Plan 2018-22

Joe McGuinness advised the members that he hoped to bring a draft of the Regional Homeless Strategy to the members at the next meeting of the SPC. He

indicated that a number of national measures are currently being considered through a national interagency group on homelessness. Some of its recommendations could be incorporated into the local elections.

7. Review of Allocation of Tidy Towns Funding

John Lawrence circulated for information a copy of a paper in relation to the methodology used to allocate Tidy Towns funding small capital works in 2018. A number of additional matters were included, including sustainability issues and the use of civic community sites. In conclusion the paper was noted.

8. A.O.B.

The members noted a number of matters including:

- The level of rent arrears and procedures;
- The provision of a cyber bullying event in Lisdoonahara, Dundalk on the 28th of April;
- The Rebuilding Ireland's targets indicated for 2018, and
- Disability representation on various housing committees.

Confirmed at Meeting held on: 30 July 2018

Signed: JOANNA BYRNE
Chairperson